

CITY OF ROCHESTER SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

Community Development Department

November 2020

CITY OF ROCHESTER ADOPTED SUSTAINABILITY GOALS



Project: LEED Green Associate Training

Staff Update

- DMC EDA & City of Rochester Energy & Sustainability Director selected as LEED Fellow in 2020
- City of Rochester Sustainability Coordinator received LEED GA accreditation in November 2020
- DMC EDA & City of Rochester Sustainability Intern received LEED GA accreditation in September 2020

Project: Sustainability Webpage & Sustainability Asset Map

Foundational Principles: Social equity, environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility and sustainability

Goal Area: City for Health, Transportation, Energy, GHG Emissions, Vibrant Neighborhoods

Key Actions: Public engagement, project reporting, community collaboration

Scope

The City of Rochester defines Sustainability as “the capacity of a community to meet the environmental, economic, and social equity needs of today without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their needs” and continues to pursue and build out an array of sustainability initiatives and projects using this three tiered approach. An update to the Sustainability webpage will reflect the work done under each of three tiers - economy, social equity and environment – with accompanying project descriptions and community resources.

Staff Update

- Completed webpage layout and associated project details and resources
- Currently working with City IT teammates to develop new webpage template
- Completed sustainability asset map data collection
- Currently working with City GIS teammates to learn and develop an asset map in ArcGIS platform

Project Timeline

- November 2020: New, completed Sustainability webpage goes live on City of Rochester website
- November 2020: Sustainability asset map goes live on Sustainability webpage

Project: Sustainability & Resiliency Task Force

Foundational Principles: Social equity, environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility and sustainability

Strategic Priorities: Enhance quality of life, manage growth and development, balance public infrastructure investment

Goal Area: City for Health, Transportation, Energy, GHG Emissions, Vibrant Neighborhoods

Key Actions: Development of action plan, public engagement, community collaboration

Scope

The Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force, a diverse cross-section of over 40 community members, was created to ensure the community has a voice in guiding the development and implementation of an action plan with input and guidance from all of Rochester's residents. The Action Plan will focus on five key areas – Vibrant Neighborhoods, City for Health, Transportation, Resilient Economy, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions – highlighting the economic, environmental and social resilience strategies that can help guide the City in future decision making.

Staff Update

- Finalized [Sustainability & Resiliency Task Force project webpage](#)
- Completed 37 individual and small group listening sessions with community members and organizations
- 160 community input survey responses received
- Analyzed listening data, categorizing “needs” into and identifying key themes across all focus areas
- Currently working with task force to develop strategies in response to community data captured

Project Timeline

- April 2020: Monthly task force workshops began
- June & July 2020: Community engagement plan under review and community listening sessions will begin
- October 2020: Task Force will debrief on community listening & begin developing strategies
- November & December 2020: Continue strategy development and overall draft action plan
- January 2021: Refine and prioritize goals and strategies, identify partners for implementation
- Spring 2021: Draft Sustainability & Resiliency Action Plan to present for review

Project: City of Rochester Green Team

Foundational Principles: Environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility and sustainability

Strategic Priorities: Foster team-oriented environment, manage growth and development, enhance quality of life

Goal Area: Energy, Transportation, GHG Emissions

Key Actions: Development and implementation of strategy plan

Scope

The City's Green Team was launched in 2020 to implement sustainability actions and initiatives within the City units, with a goal of integrating environmentally preferable practices into City operations. Team members assess current operational practices identifying opportunities in procurement, transportation, energy, waste, integrated pest management and landscaping, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Staff Update

- Completed recycling reviews of all City facilities to ensure best practices and uniform signage
- Procurement priorities discussion – target goals for % of spending on sustainable products and % of spending on local and MWBE enterprises
- Waste priorities discussion – target goals for waste reduction and diversion, reuse/recycling policies
- Reviewed and discussed Green Fleet Policy
- Presentation on Arrive Rochester app and commuter incentive pilot program discussion

Project Timeline

- October & November 2020: Scheduling check-ins with each Green Team member for feedback on year 1
- November & December 2020: Developing 2021 work plan – goals, strategies and performance metrics
- January 2021: Completed work plan for Green Team to review

Project: Energy Benchmarking Program

Foundational Principles: Environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility and sustainability

Strategic Priorities: Manage growth and development

Goal Area: Energy, GHG Emissions

Key Actions: Community engagement, data collection and analysis

Scope

The Building Energy Program seeks to help buildings limit energy waste and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Participants gain insight into the efficiency of their buildings and their relative performance to peers, encouraging energy-saving actions. The program provides performance transparency for building owners, operators and municipal leaders aiming to achieve energy and climate goals.

Staff Update

- Welcomed MN GreenCorps member in September 2020
- Currently analyzing and preparing 2019 program report
- Organizing program participant lists and building out list of new potential participants
 - Priority focus for nonprofits and MWBE enterprises
- Curating list and developing Business Blitz Program with Clean Energy Resource Teams

Project Timeline

- December 2020: 2019 Benchmarking Report completed and published
 - December 2020: ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager training with MN GreenCorps member
 - January 2021: Begin recruiting new participants
 - February 2021: Begin preparing for 2021 program kick-off
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Project: Downtown District Energy System, Analysis

Foundational Principles: Fiscal responsibility and sustainability, environmental stewardship

Strategic Priorities: Manage growth and development, balance public infrastructure investment

Goal Area: Energy, GHG Emissions

Key Actions: Infrastructure development

Scope

Several City and County government facilities are served by the Olmsted County Waste to Energy Facility (OWEF), a steam-based district energy system, which will need replacement in the coming years. As a result, the County, City and the DMC EDA are evaluating a building-based and a second district energy system (DES) option in the Downtown Waterfront sub-district. The study will inform future capital planning efforts - a DES could be leveraged to support further private development, incent affordable housing and build on RPU's 100% renewable energy resource plan.

Staff Update

- Olmsted County has decided to install independent heating and cooling systems for their facilities, City and DMC EDA are moving forward in pursuing a district energy system
- City, DMC EDA and RPU are partnering to advance the 180 deg and chilled water DES for implementation
- Presentation of results was shared with City Council in August of 2020

Project Timeline

- The Project Team (COR, RPU) are currently creating a timeline for the project and financing approach of the DES
- The Project Team is preparing next steps for City Council in a presentation in December 2020

Project: Air Quality Monitoring Program

Foundational Principles: Public safety, social equity, environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility and sustainability

Strategic Priorities: Enhance quality of life, manage growth and development

Goal Area: City for Health, Transportation, GHG Emissions, Vibrant Neighborhoods

Key Actions: Data collection and analysis, Community collaboration

Scope

In 2019 and 2020, the Community Development Department and the DMC EDA purchased 14 air quality sensors to install throughout greater Rochester and the downtown core to better understand air quality concerns. These sensors will monitor air pollution in real-time throughout the year, data is publicly available for review and download on [PurpleAir's website](#). The data will assist the City in policy decisions around transportation, planning and other key priority areas, while monitoring air quality as development continues.

Staff Update

- All 10 PurpleAir sensors have been delivered to their respective locations and installed
- Continuing to monitor PurpleAir sensors live data reporting
- 4 Vaisala sensors delivered November 2020, working on installation at downtown locations
- Developing community engagement initiatives, including a story map, with Steering Committee

Project Timeline

- On-going: Collect and analyze data with Mayo and the University of Minnesota, Rochester
- Early 2021: Launch story map
- Early 2021: Work with MPCA to develop a robust Air Quality Monitoring Program

Project: GreenStep Cities Program

Foundational Principles: Social equity, fiscal responsibility and sustainability, environmental stewardship

Strategic Priorities: Enhance quality of life, manage growth and development

Goal Area: City for Health, Transportation, Energy, GHG Emissions, Vibrant Neighborhoods

Key Actions: Data collection and analysis, performance measurement

Scope

Since its inauguration in 2010, the City of Rochester has participated in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program, a voluntary challenge, assistance, and recognition program to help cities and tribal nations achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. Step 4 recognition is awarded to cities who report a minimum number of core metrics for the previous calendar year. These metrics aim to show the aggregate, quantitative results of taking multiple GreenStep actions. Step 5 cities show improvement in the Step 4 metrics.

Staff Update

- Rochester received Step 4 and Step designation for calendar year 2019
- Rochester has completed 88 out of 175 possible actions
- Recently joined the Sustainable States Network Community Energy Challenge as a participating GreenStep City

Project Timeline

- Data collected and updated every spring, submitted by June 1st
- Cities receive recognition in July

ClimateSmart Municipalities: Through its participation in the GreenStep Cities Program, Rochester was one of five communities chosen in April 2016 to participate in the ClimateSmart Municipalities program. Minnesota municipalities were paired with award-winning climate-smart communities in Germany to accelerate progress toward a cleaner and more efficient energy footprint. Representatives are sent to Germany to learn about innovative programs and practices, then share their progress and insights in Minnesota. They also have the benefit of working with their twin community, while a delegation of municipalities and leaders visits Minnesota each fall.

Staff Update

- Participated in a virtual exchange in June 2020
 - Participated in on-going educational webinars hosted by GreenStep Cities including topics on procurement and City Green Teams
 - Participated in Binational Get-Together in October 2020
 - Attended MOU virtual signing ceremony between MPCA and Ministry for Environment (MULNV) of North Rhine-Westphalia in November 2020
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Project: Bike Share Committee & Program

Foundational Principles: Environmental stewardship, social equity, fiscal responsibility and sustainability

Strategic Priorities: Enhance quality of life, balance public infrastructure investment

Goal Area: City for Health, Transportation, GHG Emissions

Key Actions: Community collaboration

Scope

The Community Development Department partnered with 10 agencies and departments to offer a free bike sharing program for the community in 2019. Over 1,200 riders used the program during the summer of 2019 to run errands, commute to work or job interviews, get groceries or just enjoy the City' 100 miles of bike trails. In the spring of 2020 the group reviewed ridership for the program and decided to grant underutilized bikes to individuals or organizations within the community who demonstrated need. The bike share and bike grant programs allow community members with mobility challenges access to reliable transportation.

Staff Update

- Continuing to meet monthly with partners to discuss update and opportunities
- 62, 047 total Lime scooter trips since June
- 638 total e-bike trips since August

Project Timeline

On-going

Other Ongoing Projects & Cohorts:

- Food Access Assessment Planning
- Energy Commission Support, Implementation of Energy Action Plan
- Sustainable States Network, Community Energy Challenge
- ReCharge MN – Electric Vehicle Action Plan